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Conference Abstract

Specify Collections Consortium-Building Durable Infrastructure

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Abstract

The Specify Software Project (www.specifysoftware.org) has been funded by the University of Kansas and with grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation for 20 years. In 2018, the effort is pivoting from a grant-funded project to a community-supported effort through the establishment of a consortium of biological collection institutions. Specify Collection Consortium software products will remain open source and free to download and use. Consortium membership benefits will include access to technical support services and seats on the Board of Directors and advisory committees, groups that will determine priorities for future products, platform capabilities, and technical support services. In 2017 and 2018, we have been engaged in organizational planning and development–modeling the Specify Collections Consortium on examples of viable open source and open access consortia in other research communities. Founding members of the Consortium in the U.S. include the University of Michigan, University of Florida, and University of Kansas. The Consortium's mission will be to support collections institutions in mobilizing data from their holdings to broader biological and computational initiatives to advance collections-based research, while facilitating efficient data curation and collection management. We will provide an update on our progress with the Consortium's development and highlight new capabilities and integration features of the Specify 6 & 7 software platforms.

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Keywords

biological collections, databases, Specify Software, software engineering, sustainable infrastructure, specimen data, open source, research consortia

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We are particularly grateful for the vision of the Museum Directors at the Universities of Florida, Michigan, and of Kansas, in offering their investments as Founding Members of the Specify Collections Consortium. Numerous additional collections institutions have committed to Consortium membership during 2018. Norine Spears has made many critical contributions to the Specify transition process and her work has greatly facilitiated its progress.

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Hosting institution

University of Kansas

Conflicts of interest

None.